

Autonomous Presentation Assistance Theory: Applying Technology for Intelligent Assistance during Live Presentations

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A successful presentation leaves the audience not only with an understanding of how to solve a problem, but also with an understanding of how the presenter's proposed solution will help in solving that problem. In order for the audience to be converted, they must go through the cognitive "problem solving process". However, short-term or working memory is ephemeral so the audience needs a "scratch pad" to aid in recall of important points as they are being addressed. This is why speakers often use visual aids as part of the presentation process. Slideshows have always been limited on the notion that slides need to be shown in a linear, predefined sequence, with only limited options regarding the order in which content is presented. Even with more traditional applications like PowerPoint, a presenter, skilled in software use, can create some slide order flexibility at "run time". However, they cannot create a slide from scratch while giving the presentation without first exiting the active slide show and working manually on the presentation file. Nor can they offer an existing slide that is not on the current slide deck or set of available decks.

Autonomous Presentation Assistance Theory (APAT) suggests that technology either currently exists, or will soon exist, that can serve as the presenter's "assistant" during a live presentation. This paper theorizes what will be needed in order for autonomous assistance to be offered, not by a human assistant, but rather by machine. The business applications of APAT are expected to be numerous, leading to more powerful and effective presentations.